



PRESS RELEASE

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MESA MAN SENTENCED TO PRISON FOR DEALING IN HUNDREDS OF FIREARMS WITHOUT A LICENSE

PHOENIX -- Richard Gene Clausen, 56, of Mesa, Ariz., was sentenced here on September 29, 2006, to 27 months in prison and fined \$1,000 by U.S. District Court Judge Neil V. Wake. Clausen was found guilty by a federal jury on May 12, 2006, of Dealing in Firearms Without a License and Conspiracy.

While imposing sentence, Judge Wake addressed the danger Clausen's unlicensed sale of hundreds of firearms presented to society. He stated, "This is a case that also has significant consequences for public safety. We have a system of registering at least the initial sales of firearms, and your five-year course of conduct had to have had the conscious awareness that you were frustrating the ability of law enforcement to identify sources of firearms. It was like spreading poison in the public water supply. And we don't know exactly what harm, if any, specifically was done by the hundreds of firearms that you put in the unrecorded stream of commerce."

At trial, evidence was presented that between 1994 and 2001, Clausen purchased and resold 300 to 400 firearms without a federal firearms license. Clausen sold many of the firearms with the help of an unindicted co-conspirator in his 90's. The firearms were offered for sale and sold by Clausen and his co-conspirator at various locations, including gun shows, swap meets, and the co-conspirator's residence. No background checks were performed on the firearms purchasers and no sale records were maintained. Between June 24, 2000, and January 19, 2001, an ATF undercover agent purchased 23 firearms, mainly inexpensive handguns, from the co-conspirator. In many cases, Clausen had purchased the firearms shortly before, and in some cases days before, at local licensed gun stores. For example, on August 2, 2000, Clausen purchased a Rossi, Model 677, .357 caliber, revolver, from a licensed firearms dealer, the same firearm was then resold by the co-conspirator to an ATF undercover agent a week later on August 9, 2000, and on December 14, 2000, Clausen purchased a Lorcin, .380 caliber, semi-automatic pistol, and a Hungarian, 9 mm, semi-automatic pistol from a licensed firearms dealer, the same firearms were then resold by the co-conspirator to an ATF undercover agent one day later on December 15, 2000.

Clausen was out of custody on pretrial release pending sentencing. Clausen was ordered by Judge Wake to self-surrender to the Federal Bureau of Prisons for execution of his sentence on November 27, 2006.

The investigation in this case was conducted by the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives. The prosecution is being handled by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Frederick A. Battista

and Robert Long, District of Arizona.

CASE NUMBER: CR-05-572-001-PHX-NVW
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